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Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee"

JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

In acknowledging the receipt from Comrade Whittick of a copy of his "Bombs," Prince Kropotkine writes: "It is with deep emotion that I read over and over again your poetry, and, being no judge of English verses, all I can say is that I like them *very* much. We have a lot of Socialist poetry, but none has impressed me so much as yours."

It will be a pity if J. Wm. Lloyd does not receive sufficient advance orders for his projected book of poems to warrant him in proceeding with its publication. Those who remember his "Seven" and "My Dead" (to my thinking the best poem that he has written) know that he is a true poet. His book, if printed, will reflect credit on our cause, and I hope that every one who can afford to do so will speedily respond to Mr. Lloyd's advertisement, to be found on the eighth page.

Regarding "Plank Ten," Frank Foster says in his "Labor Leader": "It is possible that the plank will be adopted, for the assumption has been quite general that it came with the endorsement of the Federation, instead of, as was the fact, being simply referred for action. As is well known among members of labor organizations, there is a palpable advantage on the part of advocates of propositions of this kind, as oftentimes they go by default on account of there being no one in opposition sufficiently well informed or aggressive to contest their passage." And yet Mr. Foster advocates the Initiative and Referendum, which would lodge the same advantage with every handful of determined cranks, enabling them to pester the people with legislative surprises which it would be impossible to avoid save by a degree of vigilance that would be almost too high a price to pay even for liberty.

The Denver Trades Assembly held a meeting recently to debate the platform proposed by the American Federation of Labor. S. W. Harmon, late Populist candidate for lieutenant-governor of Colorado, spoke in favor of the State Socialistic plank, and challenged the members to show cause why it should not be adopted. The challenge was promptly accepted by delegates Anderson and Rooney from the Tailors' Union. The former asked how capitalistic exploitation could continue after interest on money was abolished; the latter inquired why State Socialists found so much fault with government and then wanted to increase its power and functions. Mr. Harmon said his questioners were Philosophic Anarchists, and that he had great respect for their views. He ignored the first question, as all State Socialists do, and his attempt to answer the second was unsuccessful. The plank was not adopted.

In order to check the increasing deficit arising from the conduct of the postal service, it is necessary to stop carrying at less than cost the enormous bulk of matter now mailed at second-class rates. As the greater portion of this matter consists of paper-covered books, trade-papers, advertising sheets, and sample copies, Postmaster-General Bissell, in his report to the president, advises that these be excluded from second-class matter, and, in order to secure support for this proposal from what he calls "legitimate" newspapers and periodicals, he offers to carry these legitimate publications to their subscribers free of charge. This is a deliberate attempt at bribery, if ever there was one. Cleveland, in his message to Congress, endorses Mr. Bissell's recommendations. Will the president tell us what the free carriage of newspapers at the expense of taxpayers would be, if not an example of the "communism of pelf"?

I desire to heartily second Mr. Byington's appeal to the comparatively unlettered element in Liberty's constituency to join the Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps. In the first place it must be remembered that many of the targets are individuals, and that the letters to these will not be published. In such cases a simple, unpretentious, common-sense letter is just the thing needed. In the second place it must be remembered that the newspapers selected as targets, though worth our powder for other reasons, are not written in English that is beyond criticism. Most of them admit very inferior specimens of composition, and even their editorial columns are not shining examples of literary style. In the third place it must be remembered that the unpublished letters to newspaper targets often have an influence upon the editor more valuable than that which the published letters have upon the readers. And in the fourth place it must be remembered that it is the *number* more than the individual excellence of the letters received that opens the target's eyes to the new direction that public opinion is taking, and arouses him to the importance of considering it. Broadly speaking, Mr. Byington's corps, as it increases in number by arithmetical progression, will increase in power by geometrical progression. So I say with him: let all join in the work! In Great Britain this work goes on spontaneously, and I have little doubt that the mental activity there prevailing is largely fostered by the very general habit of letter-writing to the press. In almost every issue of such papers as the London "Echo" and the Newcastle "Chronicle" and the Glasgow journals referred to in the last number of Liberty by Comrade Gilmour, columns are devoted to correspondence, and I observe that the Anarchists get their share of the space. Here the habit is less common; hence the need of concerted effort, like this which Mr. Byington is conducting so efficiently. I would, however, not only second, but also supplement his appeal. I would stick a very sharp pin into the man who knows perfectly well that he is smart enough to be a member of the A. L. W. C., but doesn't join because he is too lazy. I asked Mr. Byington lately for a list of the members, and he very kindly furnished it. It made a very respectable showing, but I was chiefly surprised at the names that it *did not* contain. Were it not for the impertinence, I would call these names "right out before folks." But that might give offence; and, besides, I am sure that nearly every man (and woman) of them will feel, in this paragraph, my finger pointing directly at him (or her).

It never will be said against the London "Saturday Review" that it lacks the virtue of knowing what it likes. Not satisfied with Mr. Frederic Harrison's statement in the "Forum" that "the place of Thackeray in English literature will always be determined by his 'Vanity Fair,' which will be read, we may confidently predict, as long as 'Tom Jones,' 'Clarissa,' 'Tristram Shandy,' 'The Antiquary,' and 'Pickwick,'" it ends a highly indignant three-column article with this positive, conclusive, and definitive classification: "From the latter part of this judgment we must dissent; for we believe, and we are glad of the opportunity of saying it, that Thackeray's 'Vanity Fair' is far and away the greatest prose work in English literature, a work that stands with the 'Othello' and the 'Macbeth' among the greatest productions of the human intellect; a work that has only one superior in all literature, and that is the greatest book ever written, the 'Don Quixote.'" Whew! After I had read this summary and decisive judgment, my breath actually left me for a moment. And now that I have partially recovered it, I am almost ashamed to use it for the purpose of saying, though it is the simple truth, that I read "Vanity Fair" half through and then quit. What extraordinarily divergent animals we human beings are! Why, I would not exchange "The Antiquary" for a thousand novels no better than "Vanity Fair."

Liberty.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

Narrowing the Issue.

Mr. J. K. Ingalls, in his article in another column, written to demonstrate the existence of economic interest, gives no clear definition or measure of the term. Economic rent is measured by the difference between the poorest land in use and the grades superior thereto. But what measures economic interest? Is it the difference between the product of labor absolutely destitute of capital, and that of labor possessing capital in varying degrees? But in that case economic interest is not *entirely* "derived from the increase of any labor over its bare support," since the product of labor absolutely destitute of capital would be less than a starvation wage to a man living in the midst of our civilization. Or is it measured by the difference between the product of labor possessing the poorest capital in use, and that of labor possessing better capital? Which at once gives rise to another question: what is the poorest capital in use, and how is it to be recognized as such? In the absence of a satisfactory answer to this question, Mr. Ingalls's economic interest must be looked upon as a decidedly indeterminate economic factor. All that his theory means, so far as I can grasp it, is that interest exists because people can do more with capital than without it, and that interest actually is, in fact, this surplus obtained by the employment of capital.

Now, so defining interest, the Anarchists do not wish to abolish it. Such a wish would be absurd, for it would be a wish to lessen the world's wealth and productive power. To Anarchists the only consequence of this new definition is the necessity of finding another term to represent that which they do wish to abolish, — namely, payment by borrower to lender for the use of capital.

But, once this necessary term is found or devised, the old question recurs: will free and mutual banking make it possible to procure capital without paying for its use?

To the determination of this question three other questions lead up, and I will put them to Mr. Ingalls straightway.

1. If a thousand men engaged in different lines of business unite to form a bank of issue; and if this bank of issue unites with other similar banks for clearing purposes: and if said bank lends its naturally well-known circulating credit to its members (or to others, for that matter) against conditional titles to actual and specific values given by the borrowers, — do these loans of the bank's credit cost the bank anything beyond the salaries of manager and assistants, rent of building, expenditure for paper and printing, losses by depreciation of securities, and sundry incidentals?

2. Do not statisticians and economists agree that a discount of one-half of one per cent. covers the expenses referred to in the preceding questions?

3. If men were free to unite in the formation of such banks of issue, and subject to no penalty or tax whatsoever for so doing, would not competition between the banks thus formed force the price of the service rendered by them down to cost, — that is, one-half of one per cent., — or to a figure closely approximating it?

Now, I insist, and I have a right to insist, that Mr. Ingalls shall answer these three fair and pertinent questions directly, without extraneous discussion, without any mingling of considerations or speculations not absolutely essential to the answers. For either these direct answers will be what I think they must be, and then the case of the Anarchists (so far as finance is concerned) is established; or else they will be something else, and then the case of the Anarchists falls.

If it falls, of course I shall have nothing more to say, and the publication of Liberty will be discontinued; but, if it is established, then I shall be ready to discuss with Mr. Ingalls those interesting but at present non-essential questions of collection of debts, enforcement of contracts, the comparative good and evil of discounting the future results of labor, etc., etc., etc.

By way of caution, let me add that the Anarchists do not look forward to a time when there will be no sporadic cases of payment for the use of capital, — such, for instance, as the example cited by Mr. Ingalls where an inducement is given to the endorser of a note. They simply claim that under freedom borrowing and lending will so generally take the shape of an exchange of credits at the mere cost of the exchange that interest — or, rather, what we used to call interest before Mr. Ingalls appropriated the term to a different purpose — will disappear as an influential economic factor.

T.

Sympathetic Strikes.

One of the most curious and common mistakes made by writers who lack the guidance of general principles is the assumption that whenever they discern a distinction or difference of some kind they have a sufficient ground for departure from the rule applied to ordinary cases. When the rule is applied without intelligence, attempts will be made to base exceptions on the most superficial and accidental variations; and that, too, without the feeblest effort at proving the propriety of the departure. A is treated, by common consent or established rule, in a certain way; B is slightly different from A; *therefore*, we may, or ought to, treat B differently from A. It does not appear to these reasoners that it is first necessary to show that B differs so essentially and fundamentally from A that the reason of the rule followed in the latter is inapplicable to the former.

A writer in the "Open Court," discussing the legal and ethical aspects of strikes, endeavors to suggest a remedy for "sentimental or sympathetic strikes," which he considers a grave abuse. He distinguishes between *local* and *sympathetic* strikes, and advocates the prohibition of the latter by law in all cases, even when not attended by any acts or threats of violence. He observes that under the ancient common law all strikes were treated as conspiracies, and that the recognition by law of the right to strike in a body is a recent acquisition. But it does not follow that, because strikes have become legal, sympathetic strikes can claim legal sanction. "The law ought to declare sympathetic strikes a public offence and the strikers guilty of a misdemeanor, to be punished by fine or imprisonment upon conviction before any competent court."

Now, the writer does not even attempt to prove that sympathetic strikes demand or justify different treatment from local strikes. He sees, as does everybody else, that there is a difference between the two kinds of strikes. In one case, the strikers have a grievance against their own employers and quit work for the purpose of gaining something of direct and palpable benefit to themselves. In the other case, the strikers have no quarrel with their own employers and enter upon the struggle for the purpose of aiding, in an indirect way, fellow-workmen engaged in a controversy with *their* employers. Now, the writer reasons, local strikes, once forbidden, are now legal; as to them, no question exists. But sympathetic strikes are a recent development and require to be passed upon. Since they are fraught with so much evil, why not prohibit them? It never occurred to this logician to inquire *why* local strikes are legitimate, and whether those features or elements which determine the legitimacy of such strikes are also present in sympathetic strikes. Such an inquiry would have revealed the groundlessness of the attempted distinction.

To lay down the principle that no one must strike without a personal grievance would have the effect of outlawing not only sentimental strikes, but a large number of local strikes as well. Suppose a man, or a number of men, should strike neither in pursuance of a personal end nor in aid of others, but just out of caprice, without any reason at all. The strike would be local, but it would lack the element of personal grievance. Would the "Open Court" logician suppress it? If yes, then he commits himself to the position that men cannot, even in the absence of contractual obligation, refuse to continue in the employ of a person who has absolutely no right over them; in other words, industrial freedom is abolished, and workmen are condemned to slavery. If the answer be "No," and men are to have the right to strike without a grievance, then the absurdity of drawing the line at sympathetic strikes becomes very glaring indeed. The position would be this: men may strike without any grievance when there is no intention of aiding thereby somebody else who is striking *with* a grievance; but when there is such an intention,

when the strike is sympathetic, the law should forbid it. Can any rational man offer a reason for such a distinction?

The theoretical absurdity, as might be expected, also turns out to be a practical impossibility. It would be futile to attempt to prohibit sentimental strikes, for there is nothing to prevent would-be sympathetic strikers from inventing a personal grievance and alleging that as the ground of the strike. Suppose the men who strike sympathetically pretend that an advance in wages is what they are after. The pretence might be transparent, yet it would be impossible to prove that the men do *not* strike for an advance in wages.

I had thought that Historian von Holst had gone to the extreme of ignorance of liberty and defiance of logic in his philippic against sympathetic strikes. But the "Open Court" writer shows me how unsafe it is to set a limit to confusion and logical incapacity. Y.

"The Soul of Man under Socialism."

The State Socialists often pooh-pooh my declaration that authoritarian control of the means of production will end in authoritarian control of the individual life to an extent now hardly dreamed of; but in practice they do their best to verify it as soon as they get an opportunity. Witness the action of the London County Council, now virtually a State Socialist body, in refusing to renew the license of the Empire Theatre because of the promenade frequented by women of objectionable character. Nearly all the "Progressives," led by John Burns himself, voted against the renewal. This piece of high-handed interference with private morals is sickening to some of the State Socialists themselves. I notice that one or two Fabian members of the Council remained at home, presumably afraid to vote against their friends and ashamed to vote with them. And one need not go to Anarchistic sources or the daily newspapers to find fitting condemnation of the outrage. In another column I reprint an editorial from the London "Church Reformer," written by Rev. Stewart Headlam, himself a State Socialist, and a Christian clergyman at that. He roundly scores these drain-builders who presume to meddle with art and the people's recreation. By their act, he declares, the cause of Socialism is set back for many years.

But what did Mr. Headlam expect? If men may not work as they please, why may they play as they please? John Burns is the logical Socialist; Mr. Headlam stops short. The latter still has in him a considerable degree of that sense of decency and manly feeling which is inconsistent with the *rôle* of "brother's keeper"; the former, if he ever had it, has lost it altogether. Ah! Oscar Wilde, begin you not to have fears for "the soul of man under Socialism"? T.

If the new banking system recommended by Cleveland and Carlisle were to be adopted by Congress, — which luckily is far from likely, — it would result in a serious set-back for the cause of free and mutual banking. This system, it is true, would remove the tax from State banks complying with certain conditions, and therefore has the appearance of a step in the direction of freer banking. But the conditions insisted upon are the very conditions that would operate to prevent competition from doing its legitimate work of abolishing interest. All banks, whether State or national, would be obliged, under this plan, to have a paid-up and unimpaired capital greater by at least one-third than the volume of their notes in circulation. Now, the essential point in the mutual banking theory is the claim that banks of issue as such need no capital of their own, being furnished with all the capital that they need in the securities pledged by the parties to whom they lend their circulating notes; and it is because they need no capital of their own that they would be able to carry on their business of exchanging credits without including in the price of their services any interest, or charge for the use of capital. But banks required by law to maintain a capital one-third greater than their circulation would be obliged to figure the item of interest on this capital into the cost of running their business, and to fix the rate of discount accordingly. The Carlisle plan, then, would have little or no influence in the direction of abolishing interest; and yet it looks enough like freer banking to give some color of justification to the really ignorant cry that would straightway go up in answer to the Anarchists: "See! You've got your free banking. Now, what does it amount to?" And it would be many years before the matter could be explained.

Michael A. Doherty, lately dismissed from a police captaincy for levying blackmail on saloon-keepers, is about to try the other end of the game. It is reported that he will open a saloon in Brooklyn.

The closing of the Empire Theatre is very properly condemned by the "Twentieth Century." But why doesn't the "Twentieth Century" call names, and say that this thing was done by John Burns and its other Socialistic friends in London?

In the "Western Laborer," W. H. (our old friend Hudspeth, I presume), expresses a strong desire that "all reformers should concentrate their forces on some certain platform and put it into operation." Big idea, Hudspeth! Suppose you begin the good work by concentrating your force with mine on my platform?

I do not know why Mr. Yarros, in his vigorous article on "Sympathetic Strikes," is so merciful to the "Open Court" writer who is the object of his criticism as to omit all mention of his name. The memory of this precious idiot must be embalmed. So let me supply Mr. Yarros's omission by stating that the article in the "Open Court" bears the signature of G. Koerner.

The "Voice" calls attention to the fact that at the complimentary dinner recently given to Dr. Parkhurst, the moral reformer, champagne was freely served to all who wanted it, while at the dinner given by the Boston Home Market Club, at which Reed, Hoar, and other Republican candidates for political loaves and fishes were present, not a drop of alcoholic liquors was served. It regrets that the committee in charge of the Parkhurst affair did not have as much sense or courage as the committee of the Home Market Club. Innocent "Voice"! It is not a question of courage, but of experience and training in the art of hypocrisy. The Parkhurst reformers are as yet amateurs; the Home Market Club is composed of consummate professional humbugs and hypocrites who know the ropes thoroughly. Possibly the Home Marketers denied themselves wine for the purpose of showing the effect of hard times on their incomes. Besides, liquor is a local issue. You can get more votes in New York by manifesting a due appreciation of the virtues of champagne than by posing as dry fanatics. Boston is different, perhaps.

The librarian of the Denver (Colo.) Public Library offers two dollars each for two copies of "The Science of Society" by Stephen Pearl Andrews (the edition published by Sarah E. Holmes). George A. Schilling, of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Springfield, Ill., offers one dollar and postage for one copy of the same work. It is now out of print. Any one having a copy and willing to part with it on these terms should communicate with the parties above mentioned.

The Populist papers are pointing out that the railroads of the United States kill and wound over thirty-six thousand persons annually, whereas the proportion is ten times smaller in countries having governmental control of railroads. But they carefully neglect to add that the proportion is also ten times smaller in certain other large countries where there is no governmental control of railways. Bastiat was fond of telling us that there are things that we see and other things that we *don't* see. With the Populists and State Socialists this is different. There are things that they see and other things that they *won't* see.

I note that Horace L. Traubel writes in his "Conservator" a long poem to "The Dead Czar." I read it with considerable interest to see if he had repeated the mistake of his master, Whitman, by doing homage to a tyrant. It is gratifying to report that he avoided such an error. While I can hardly think it worth while to write a hundred lines and more of poetry in emphasis of the rather trite lesson that czars, like other people, have been the necessary and therefore excusable products of their ancestry, such apology is admissible if not accompanied by falsehood and adulation. Traubel, with all his tolerance, is far too honest to say of Alexander III. what Whitman said of the old Emperor William, — that he was "a faithful shepherd of his people."

George E. Macdonald, in his "Observations" in the "Truth Seeker" of December 8, pays high compliments to Mr. John Burns and turns up his nose at Lady Henry Somerset. When my usually well-informed nephew learns from this number of Liberty that Mr. John Burns made himself the principal tool of the Mrs. Chants and the Lady Somersets in closing the Empire Theatre, he probably will indulge in some additional "observations," and the same are awaited with interest by his Uncle Benjamin. I must admit that it is decidedly a feather in the cap of the English labor politician that he can pull the wool over the eyes of my nephew, — a penetrating young man whose vision remains unclouded in the face of all the arts of Mr. Burns's American prototypes.

Neglected Factors in the Rent Problem.

It is not my purpose to lose myself in the mathematical maze through which Comrades Robinson and Byington are now gropingly threading their way. But I may point out to the latter, anent the dire perplexities in which he has involved 111 coal miners (see another column), that political economy knows not only a law of diminishing returns, but a law of increasing returns as well, and that he has ignored this branch of the law in the operation of his second mine.

In the first mine, where 100 men are already at work at the time of Mr. Byington's hypothesis, it may fairly be supposed that the law of diminishing returns begins to apply; but in the second mine, where not even one man works until there are 110 at work in the first, it is equally fair to suppose that the law of increasing returns will be in force until here also there are 100 workers. In that case the second mine, instead of yielding (as Mr. Byington presumes) one workman $900, two $1790, three $2670, &c., would yield one workman $900, two $1810, three $2730, &c. This little fact brings a wonderful change over the spirit of Mr. Byington's dreadful dream. For no sooner will his 111th miner have begun to work the second mine alone than he will be joined by the 110th, and the 109th, and the 108th, and the 107th, &c., &c., each new accession having a tendency to increase the earnings of the 11 men and to reduce the swollen incomes of the original 100, and the movement as a whole achieving, if not a restoration of absolute equality, at least a considerable approach to it. Which again impels me to recall the remark of Bastiat that there are things that we see and things that we don't see.

Again: the hypothesis is unwarrantably violent in predicating the existence of but one first-quality mine. As a matter of fact, there would in most cases be a number of superior mines nearly on a level in point of quality, and, as the demand for coal increased, these mines would compete to secure extra labor, the competition forcing them to pay for this labor as much as could be paid without reducing the $1000 income enjoyed by each of the original occupants.

Still again: absolute freedom being the condition of the hypothesis, these mines would compete for this labor, not only with each other, but with all the other branches of industry newly opened or increased in activity by free money, free land, and free conditions generally, which would make it still less possible to obtain labor without awarding it its full product.

And further: it is assuming too much to say that a fair interpretation of the terms occupancy and use could exclude all but 100 men from the mine in question. Here the economic problem becomes complicated with engineering problems which I am incompetent to discuss; but it is not at all sure that the theory of occupancy and use would enable any hundred men to get the grip on subterranean riches that is here presumed.

And — last consideration of all — mining is but one, and the smallest, of the four great classes of labor, and the others are not relieved in the same degree from the equalizing influence of competition; so that, were a considerable inequality proven a necessity of mining, it would not follow that there would be as great inequality, or necessarily any at all, in agriculture, manufactures, and commerce.

Thus you see, Mr. Byington, that, do your little sum as nicely as you will, there are still a few other things to be thought of.

It must not be supposed, however, that I share Mr. Robinson's view that economic rent is not a reality. I believe that economic rent exists now, and would continue under freedom, but then with a tendency to decrease and a possibility (though not a probability) of ultimate disappearance. In any event, taking the worst view of the matter, it would be distributed among actual occupants and users, — a *vastly* greater number than now enjoy it, — which would be much better for *all* than to distribute it among those who benefit by political jobbery, or among the people themselves through the agency of a State landlord, which would speedily become, by successive grants and usurpations of power, a State money-lord, a State industry-lord, a State education-lord, a State religion-lord, a State love-lord, and a State art-lord.

Equality if we can get it, but Liberty at any rate! T.

Mr. Auberon Herbert expresses a wish in "Free Life" that I would draw up the case against interest so that he can see to what I object. I have done this very thing many, many times. But in the hope that I can now fix Mr. Herbert's attention upon my claim I respond to his wish by referring him to the three questions which I put to Mr. J. K. Ingalls in another column. I ask Mr. Herbert to consider them as addressed to him also. These questions sum up my "case against interest," because I have no other case against interest than that it cannot appear (except sporadically) under free conditions. Let Mr. Herbert answer my questions. If he gives answers which he can show to be sound, and which demonstrate that interest can persist where free competition prevails, he will close my mouth forever. If, on the other hand, it shall appear that true answers to the questions demonstrate that a free market will kill interest, there will then be no occasion to discuss "the moral side of the question," to use Mr. Herbert's phrase. For Mr. Herbert certainly will not claim that a thing is just after he has been convinced that freedom would destroy it.

Unescapable Interest.

There is an economic interest as well as rent, and it differs from that which is captured by the stronger and more cunning from the weaker and more stupid through the enforcement of barbarous (not economic) laws and customs. Since the days of Jeremy Bentham, the nature of usury has been argued, pro and con, on parallel lines; neither party discovering that what he approved was not at all the thing which the other condemned. Neither traced interest to its source.

Interest is derived from the increase of any labor over its bare support; the natural wage of Adam Smith, where it exceeds the starvation wage of David Ricardo. For, without such increase, rent, interest, or profit could have no existence. Some labor, from unfavorable location, inefficiency, or lack of knowledge, is unproductive. In the application of new discoveries in machinery, and in new processes of production and exchange, and in opportunity to coöperate with others in effort, the one who holds to the old methods works at a disadvantage in comparison with the one who first adopts them, and there seems neither utility nor equity in requiring the alert man to share his surplus with the laggard, as the State Socialist would recommend, and as the Anarchist must do before he can abolish economic interest.

In the recent discussion in Liberty more than one disputant follows grooves which prevent him from seeing the true position of his opponent. From the standpoint of the sentimentalist, interest is tribute captured from the increased wealth due to labor, by the help of State interference. But the economist sees the economic increase from successful labor, and thinks it just; and, whether just or not, it is unescapable, — not because, as he imagines, property is productive (unless, indeed, it is made to embrace the land or the laborer), but because of the uncertainty of all human endeavor, and because men are willing to pay a premium for the opportunities and instruments which best assure success, or the immediate gratification of desire. Now, that official circulating credit could eliminate the uncertainties and variability of productive industry is quite problematical. Could it affect the rate of interest in any way, it could not abolish it for the reasons given. That mutual banking, or freedom to engage in the issue of circulating credit, can eradicate usury has never been demonstrated or logically made to appear. The legal or market rate of interest is at present greatly increased by the charge for the endorsement of one firm by another. A premium of from one to three per cent., and even more, is voluntarily given by a party of well-known soundness by a party not as well known, though sound in point of fact.

Had each party the freedom to circulate their credit at will, it could in no wise alter this relation of the parties in such transactions. The credit more widely receivable would command a premium over that confined to a narrow and local circulation.

It is when contracted indebtedness is subjected to enforced settlement that the true inwardness of our governmentalism is manifest. In soliciting the State to collect his debts, however contracted, the Archist exposes his true position. But, when the Anarchist calls upon his comrades to help him enforce his contracts, because they are contracts, and assumed to be made under freedom, in what important respect does he differ from the Archist? To me it seems quite immaterial whether abundant money makes the rate of interest higher or lower, or whether a three-cent piece could do the business of the world, — as evidently it could, were it sufficiently divisible and all other money effectually prohibited. What utility requires *is* material, and whether the interest we are investigating is economic or the fruit of capture and exploitation. If economic, it is necessarily variable and undulating, and yet inexpugnable. If exploitive, it is Archic and involves legal interference and physical enforcement.

Economic interest is inevitable from the uncertain award of labor in production and the variations in the ratio of supply to demand; besides, there is a large proportion of the laborers unable and wholly disinclined to employ themselves. This state is likely to continue for generations, and they will continue to sell their labor at a rate which will yield profit to the employer, out of which he can pay interest. Government might despotically attempt to prevent this by law, with punitive sanction; or by wholesale employment of labor, at no profit. How an Anarchist could imagine a scheme of circulating credit would obviate the defects of ignorance and negligence, and the variations of values in exchange, is too deep for me.

The importance of circulating credit, or of any credit whatever, except the unavoidable balances of reciprocal commerce, is greatly overrated by fiat-money men, and by paper-money men of all classes. All time credits, all loans on bonds, etc., are but compounding the penalty for deferred payment; are not only unnecessary, but vicious, with little compensative benefit for the incalculable harm they do. Even the Christian formula: "Lend, hoping for nothing again," proves oftener a curse than a help to the borrower. To discount the future results of one's labor can only result in loss. This is particularly true of the wage-worker, who finds himself often under the necessity of requiring his wages before they are earned. Neither government nor comradeship can usefully interfere here. The form or material of money can in no way

change the relation between borrower and lender, unless, through contraction or inflation by those holding the authority, it is made to favor the one at the expense of the other, which violates both equity and utility.

The State, as an arbitrary potency, has created and sanctioned the appropriation of the land by private greed, and of the laborer as well; has devised for a class the monopoly of opportunities of production, exchange, and finance. To divest it of the powers thus used is the only logical plan for restoring economic equity. With the taxing power unrestrained, it can be exercised to the fattening of favorites by starving the laborer. It can tax the issues of your mutual banks out of existence, as it has already those of your State banks.

The operation of economic interest, as of rent and profit, tends to equilibrium, equality in compensations and of conditions. There is no occasion to antagonize it or decry it. Liberty has accorded to this theory of interest the merit of novelty. Will any of its writers or readers attempt to show that "what is new in it is not true"?

GLENORA, N. Y. J. K. INGALLS.

The Rent Problem.

To the Editor of Liberty:

In No. 299 you ask what morals Prof. Monroe and I would draw from his experience with the counterfeit Kentucky notes. I have asked him, and he says the only lessons he notices in it are that the old State-bank system was not good, and that the country needs a thoroughly safe currency on a gold basis. My own thoughts had been that the story was interesting as an instance in which legislative interference with the currency had produced an effect very different from that which the legislators desired, and as an instance in which, under given circumstances, adaptation to the needs of trade had proved more efficacious in keeping up the value of an issue of notes than convertibility.

In the same number Mr. Robinson answers my complaint of his answer to Shaw by saying that, under freedom, it is impossible for the produce of one piece of land from a day's work to be more in value than that of another, because, if the produce of the first is better in quality, the second will not be worked till the first is so far exhausted that its product, per day's work, is inferior enough in quantity to make up the difference. I do not see it so.

There is a well-known economic law, the "law of diminishing returns," under which, when a certain amount of work is being put on a piece of land, every additional day's work increases the product less than the last preceding addition of a day's work had done. Thus there might be a coal-mine in which 100 workmen could produce $100,000 worth of coal in a year, or $1,000 per man; 101 could produce $100,990 worth, the addition of one man having increased the product $990; 102 men, $101,970, an increase of $980 over the product of 101; 103 men, $102,940, a further increase of $970; and so on. (The exactness, or even probability, of my figures is no more essential to my argument than it was to Mr. Robinson's.) There might also be, near by, another mine which would yield one workman $900, two $1790, three $2670, etc.

Suppose that the first mine has been worked jointly by 100 men, who, having dug the galleries and put in the timbers and machinery, are in unquestioned occupancy and use of the mine. I am assuming that occupancy and use are the sole title to land, and that perfect liberty prevails in other respects. Now, suppose that it becomes desirable to produce more coal in this district. Here comes another man and wants employment at the mine. If he is taken in as an equal partner, there will be only $999.90 for each of the 101. So, as they do not want to lose ten cents each for his sake, they hire him at $990, which is just what one new man is worth to them as employers, and each of them keeps his $1000.

Perhaps a single dime is not worth making that fuss over. But suppose two men come instead of one. If they are taken as partners, each partner gets $999.70. If they are hired, and the second man is paid more than $980, it will pay the employers to discharge the second man; for they will lose only $980 in produce, and save more than that in wages. Since either of the two may be counted as second man (for of course all the men I deal with are exactly equal in efficiency as workmen), it will pay better to discharge either man than to pay either more than $980. Then both men are paid $980, and each of the 100 partners gets $1000.10. Only if the two employees choose to form a trade-union, and declare that both shall stay at the best current prices or both will go, they can get $985 each — no more — and cut down the partners' income to $1000.

Increase the employees to ten. If they have no union, they get $900 each, and the employing partners get $1004.50 each for doing the same work. If the employees have a union, their wages are $945 each, and the employers get $1000 each for the same work. Nothing nearer equality can be had, unless the employers voluntarily lose money for charity's sake.

When the eleventh man comes, if there is no union, he will begin working the second mine, and get $900. If there is a union, he will join it, wages for all employees falling to $940.91, and his employers will set him to work at the second mine. In either case it pays better that he be producing $900 there than $890 at the first mine. In a sense he might produce $994.05 at the first mine, for with 111 workers it produces $994.05 per man. Nevertheless, the addition of the 111th man increased its product only $890, and that is all he is worth in wages at that mine.

Thus it has paid to begin working the second mine, producing $900 a year to its one man, while the first is still producing $995 per man with 110 workmen, contrary to Mr. Robinson's principle. And the men who control the use of the better mine have thereby an advantage of from $59.09 to $104.50, according to the efficiency of the employees' union, contrary to Mr. Robinson's other principle. When the number of improvement-owners becomes small and the number of employees large, and the neighborhood of a large body of non-union men makes the union comparatively weak, such a mine becomes a first-class dollar-factory for the owners.

Economic equality cannot be had when some men control better natural opportunities than are open to others, whether they control them by a paper title or by a title consisting of improvements on the land. Whether the inequality in a given case will be great or small is a question that must be answered by real, not imaginary, figures. It seems to me that land tenure by occupancy and use, as explained by Mr. Tucker in his last reply to me on this question (in June, 1893, I think; my file of Liberty is lent just now), would be so nearly the same thing in practice as our present tenure that the amount of rent would be not so very far from what it is now.

STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps.

The Secretary wants every reader of Liberty to send in his name for enrolment. Those who do so thereby pledge themselves to write, when possible, a letter every fortnight, on Anarchism or kindred subjects, to the "target" assigned in Liberty for that fortnight. All, whether members or not, are asked to lose no opportunity of informing the secretary of suitable targets. Address, STEPHEN T. BYINGTON, 38 Council Hall, Oberlin, Ohio.

To the man who doesn't join the A. L. W. C. because he feels that he isn't smart enough.

Dear Sir, — You will pardon me for not having perfect faith in your estimate of your own powers. I can hardly believe that a man who enjoys reading Liberty, and accepts Liberty's arguments, is so foggy-headed a fool as to be of no use at all to the cause he supports. It is a trite saying of the maxim-makers that those who perceive their own ignorance are farther advanced in knowledge than those who think they know it all. But, as you are the only person who controls your actions in this matter, I must accept your estimate of yourself as a basis for argument, unless I can convince you that it is wrong.

Be it granted, then, that your brain is no better than the average, — that is the reason why you haven't had sense to see how good a thing membership in the A. L. W. C. would be for you, — that your literary skill is nothing so far as you know, that you can't spell, and that you have grown too gray to correct these faults. I don't see that it follows that you can't do anything to enlighten your neighbors by letters. You do, I hope, know what one or two of the essential points of Anarchism are, and have reasons satisfactory to yourself for believing in them. Then you know just so much more than our usual targets, and if you will only tell them what you do know you can help them to know more than they do. If you haven't much light to give, give a little; it will help the world on just so far, and it may well be that the little you can give is as much as the target could receive, even if more were offered. Seventy-five cent. of our targets are no smarter than you, even they do sit in editors' chairs, and ninety-nine per cent. are less well informed than you on these subjects.

And did you never hear the saying, "Learn by teaching"? Explaining Anarchism to others is one of the best means of clearing and expanding your own ideas about it. I have more than once found that in writing to the target I assigned myself I was set at a train of thought which I afterward re-wrote for the editorial columns of Liberty; and the articles so produced have been, I think, as good as any I have written.

Special literary skill is useful, if it is the genuine article; but it isn't indispensable. An idea blunderingly expressed is more effective than an idea not expressed at all. And most of your tribe, I am sure, can make a plain statement of some of the simplest things we need to teach the public, if you will only try. Three or four of you have written me letters on various subjects, in which you said that you would join the Corps if you did not feel that you were incompetent. In all that I remember of those letters you said what you had to say in good English, and I had no difficulty in getting the ideas you meant to convey. Do the same thing now in your letters for the Corps. If your lack of rhetorical culture keeps you from putting on a frilled and cushioned introduction and conclusion to your letter, and you are unable to do anything but say what you mean, and then stop, I can assure you that in that respect you are just the kind of letter-writer I want.

One of the main purposes of the Corps is to utilize the force of our weaker writers by combining their work. Half a dozen letters will produce an effect where any one of them, if it had come unsupported, would have been disregarded. I believe, as I have said before, that just now our movement is in more need of a great number of workers, even commonplace men, scattering the proclamation of our fundamental ideas as widely and thickly as possible, than of great genius on the part of a few leaders.

I would rather have the membership of an able and prominent man than of a second-rate man, of course; but I want them both. Let every man who is willing to help spread the light in this way send in his name. I will take all risks as to our ability to make his service profitable.

Target, section A. — The "Daily Dispatch," 26 N. High street, Columbus, Ohio," has often attacked "Anarchism." On December 1 it had an editorial on the proposed law against alien Anarchists, in which it said: "If this bill becomes a law, the United States will have an anti-Anarchist statute scarcely less severe than those of Russia. That some such law should be upon our statute books we know now, and in the future the necessity, if unfulfilled, will become more apparent." Defend freedom of opinion, and perhaps also point out that Anarchism is really nothing so dreadful.

Section B. — The "Texas Union Workman," Galveston, Tex., a trade-union and Single-Tax paper, is responsible for the following, which went the rounds of the Single-Tax papers some time ago:

> Digest this if it takes you all day to do it, and if you can't digest it, may it make you sick. The law can defend you in your rights (which it doesn't), or it may deprive you of your rights (which it does), but it cannot invest you with any rights you do not already have. It may confer privileges on you, but it can only do so by depriving somebody else of his rights. Rights existed before man was, and all rights that do not exist when law is must have been taken away by law. And behold, that is what nine-tenths of the laws are for.

Point out the sweeping application of the principles, — free money, free mails, etc., even to "the right to ignore the State."

Section C. — A. Horr, Dallas, Tex., is a very active and efficient worker for the Single Tax. He is still a very young man, able to take in new ideas. Show why he should not confine his reform work to Single Tax.

STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

"The garden of the laws is full of ironical plants, of unexpected flowers; and by no means its slightest charm is this subversion of the natural order, whereby appear at the end of stems and branches fruit just the opposite of that which is promised by the essence of the tree or bush. The apple-tree bears figs, and the cherry-tree medlars; violet-plants yield sweet potatoes, and hollyhocks salsify. It is delicious." —SÉVERINE.

The Beauties of Government.

☞ *The readers of Liberty are urgently invited to contribute to this department. It is open to any statement of facts which exhibit the State in any phase of its fourfold capacity of fool, meddler, knave, and tyrant. Either original accounts based upon the writer's own knowledge, or apparently reliable accounts clipped from recent publications, are welcome*

WITH WHOM DID EITHER INTERFERE?
[New York Sun.]

A good-looking, stylishly-dressed young man, who described himself as Edward D. Houghton, aged 22, an actor, of 145 East Fifteenth street, this city, and Annie Whalen, a remarkably pretty girl of 15, who lives at 207 Fourteenth street, Hoboken, were arraigned before Recorder McDonough yesterday, accused of disorderly conduct. The couple were seen going into the Continental Hotel, at First and Hudson streets, about midnight of Tuesday. Somebody told Police Captain Hayes about it, and the Captain sent Roundsman Cross to the hotel. Houghton was very indignant when the roundsman forced his way into the room he and the girl were occupying and placed them under arrest.

The girl seemed to be overwhelmed with shame and wept bitterly. She was very neatly dressed, and her face, set off by her rich, golden hair, was pretty enough for a picture. She cried incessantly during the examination in the Recorder's court, and kept her face concealed with a handkerchief. Recorder McDonough let Houghton off with a fine of $10, but committed the weeping girl to the penitentiary for ninety days.

[Those readers of this paragraph who make equality the first desideratum will be excited to wrath because the girl was punished more severely than the man; those, on the other hand, who value liberty more will consider it a far graver matter that either of those inoffensive persons were punished at all. Logical Single Taxers and Woman Suffragists will be found in the former class, Anarchists in the latter. No one can be angrier than I at the outrage committed by the court upon this girl, and yet I think the sum total of injustice done in the two cases was greater than if the girl's punishment had remained the same and the man had not been punished even by a fine. Mrs. Ellen Battelle Dietrick probably will not agree with me.]

AN UNREMUNERATIVE PRISONER.
[New York Sun.]

That a boy who had committed no offence had been kept a prisoner in the Tombs for over two months became known to Coroner Schultze and a jury yesterday while dealing with the case of Charles Biermann, a two year-old child, who was run over and fatally injured by an express wagon on August 8. The accident occurred at Clinton and Delancey streets. On that day Julius Hirshberg, thirty-two years old, of 109 Second street, the driver of the wagon, engaged a seventeen-year-old boy, named Harry Bennett, of 17 Orchard street, to assist him in his trips about the city. While passing the corner of Clinton street, Hirshberg, who was driving, ran over the Biermann child.

It was brought out at the inquest yesterday that, when he saw what had occurred, Hirshberg tossed the lines to Bennett, and told the policeman who arrested the occupants of the wagon that the boy had been driving when the accident took place. The prisoners were arraigned before Justice Simms, in the Essex Market police court, where it was made to appear that the boy was chiefly to blame for the accident. Hirshberg was admitted to $2,000 bail, and young Bennett was committed to the Tombs prison to await the action of the Coroner and of the Grand Jury. Hirshberg was promptly bailed out by a man named Muller.

While the District Attorney was waiting for the action of the Coroner, in some way or other the case was not brought to the latter's attention, and the friendless prisoner was allowed to remain in prison. Finally, after two months of waiting, the case was brought up, and yesterday Bennett was taken from his cell to the Coroner's court room. For some unexplained reason, Hirshberg, the real defendant, did not appear at the inquest. No one was able to explain why he was not there, or what efforts had been made to find him. Young Bennett told, in a straightforward way, how he had been sitting beside the driver when the accident occurred, and how the blame of the affair had been shifted to his shoulders.

"I have been in prison for over two months," he said, "and no one seemed to care whether I ought to be there or not. I was arrested for something that I never did."

After hearing the testimony, the jurymen exonerated the boy without leaving their seats He was taken back to the Tombs, however, to await action on the part of the District Attorney's office.

At the District Attorney's office something was said about having waited for the action of the Coroner in the case. It was declared that all police papers in manslaughter cases were held in the clerk's office until the Coroner had acted. At the Coroner's office it was said that, until Tuesday, nothing was known about the case; much less that a prisoner was locked up pending an inquest. It was added that young Bennett had been committed to await the action of the Grand Jury, and that the Coroner had not been notified of his incarceration.

[Little wonder that poor and friendless prisoners are forgotten. Their cases are uninteresting to the police and the authorities, for there is no possibility of bleeding them.]

NO HELP FOR THE HELPLESS.
[New York Sun.]

Two boys, of 16 and 4 years of age respectively, and two girls of 14 and 12 years, were before Judge McAdam in the superior court begging piteously not to be given into the custody of their grandmother, and two of them wept when the judge reluctantly ordered that they should be so disposed of.

The children's mother, Mrs. Edith Lee McDonald, who was a widow, died last Sunday night. Their grandmother, Mrs. Naonic Lee, obtained a writ of *habeas corpus*, which commanded George G. Trimmingham, of 127 West 129th street, to produce the children in court and show cause why he should not give them into the custody of their grandmother. The story brought out by Lawyer Franklin Bartlett, who appeared for Mr. Trimmingham, was that, when Mrs. McDonald was dying, she begged of Mr. Trimmingham, almost with her last breath, that he should keep her children with him, and not allow her mother, Mrs. Lee, to have possession of them. Mr. Trimmingham had been for many years a dear friend of the children's mother, and they were remaining with him voluntarily, and were in no way deprived by him of their full liberty.

Judge McAdam addressed the two elder children and asked them if they wished to remain with Mr. Trimmingham or go with their grandmother. Both children said decidedly that they wished to remain in the custody of their dead mother's friend, and were equally decided in their opposition to going with their grandmother.

"That settles it so far as those two are concerned," said the judge, "for they are old enough to decide in the matter for themselves."

The younger children, the court said, must go with their grandmother if she insisted on her legal right as their nearest of kin. The grandmother did so insist, and then the younger children burst into tears and clung to Mr. Trimmingham, begging not to be taken from him and separated from their brother and sister.

Judge McAdam asked the woman if some way could not be agreed upon by which it would not be necessary for him to order the separation of the children. The woman again insisted upon her legal rights, and the judge exclaimed:

"It is a very cruel thing you are doing, but, if you insist, you must have your pound of flesh."

All the children were weeping as they left the court room, and when, in the corridor, Mrs. Lee attempted to take the two awarded to her, they resisted and wailed so bitterly that a crowd of people gathered about the group. When Mrs. Lee found that the children would not go off with her unless they were taken by force, she agreed that they could remain with Mr. Trimmingham one month.

[It is a curious protection that the State offers, — aiding the stronger and permitting the abuse of the weaker. In this instance the two children who were better able to defend themselves were protected against the heartless grandmother, while the two who were utterly helpless were placed in her power. And this in spite of the judge's better judgment and because of the rigid law.]

SAUCE FOR THE GANDER.
[New York Sun.]

CLEVELAND, Nov. 27. — Under cross-examination by Chairman Bailey of the Congress sub-committee, Judge A. K. Ricks hesitated this afternoon, and finally pleaded ignorance of the law regulating the collection of fees, with the misappropriation of which he is charged. There was consternation among the six corporation lawyers who are defending the Judge, and a lively tilt between Mr. Bailey and Judge Stevenson Burke followed.

Miss Minnie Lillis, who was employed by Judge Ricks to make the record in the Birdsall cases, testified that she had signed a voucher for $300 for work done by herself in making the records, when, as a matter of fact, she had received $153 for the work. She was paid $30 a month by Judge Ricks, and work on the Birdsell cases occupied about five months. This was after Judge Ricks had been elevated to the bench and after the time in which he was allowed by law to collect fees as clerk.

"It is the custom to collect fees in such cases after leaving the office," said Judge Ricks, "and I thought it was right."

"Custom makes law, your Honor," suggested Judge Burke.

"Not when custom is contrary to the statutes," retorted Mr. Bailey.

[Ignorance of the law is no excuse, Judge. You are hoist with your own petard. This Judge Ricks, by the way, is one of the inventors of that new tyranny, specially devised for the quieting of restive labor, known as government by injunction.]

VICARIOUS ATONEMENT.
[New York Sun.]

One of the absurdities of the Penal Code in reference to election is contained in section 41 X of chapter 693, which provides for the filing of statements of election expenses by candidates for public office. The intent of the law, of course, was to minimize the bribery and corruption, and to compel the candidates to state under oath the amount of their expenses.

The law says that "every candidate who is voted for at a public election" shall within ten days file an itemized statement of his expenses, and in New York city it is to be sent or taken to the county clerk's office. Any candidate who refuses or neglects to do this is guilty of a misdemeanor and, says the law, "shall also forfeit his office." Now, the great majority of candidates for public office here as elsewhere are defeated, not elected. They have no office to forfeit unless it be some other office than the one to which they aspired. Furthermore, a man may be voted for without his knowledge or procurement. He may be voted for in his absence. But, if he is voted for, even to the extent of a solitary ballot, he must file a statement of his expenses or be guilty of a misdemeanor.

The absurdity of this proposition is shown by one illustration. There is a man in the twelfth assembly district of this city who is — or was up to the recent election — a great admirer of Grover Cleveland. When he can't vote for Mr. Cleveland for president,

he votes for him for assemblyman or alderman. This occurs every year, and under the section cited Mr. Cleveland would be liable to prosecution criminally each year for his failure to file a statement of his expenses in securing the solitary vote of his Twelfth district admirer.

There is a still more flagrant case. Frank Ferrell, a colored politician of the eleventh district, was nominated for the assembly by the Milholland organization. He was long enough in the field to ascertain that his fight was hopeless, and then he withdrew in a public card. That seemed to be the end of the matter, but it wasn't. Not being a candidate, Mr. Ferrell incurred no expenses; yet the county clerk, under a strict construction of the law, reports that Mr. Ferrell is a delinquent for not filing his statement, and is liable to prosecution.

[Here, if there is any invasion at all, it is committed by the man who votes for another without his knowledge or consent. Yet the law compels the party who is invaded to atone for the act of the invader. This is even more ridiculously unjust than the French statute at which we laugh, providing for the punishment of any one who may receive a letter in which Anarchism is mentioned. After such absurdities it is time to draw the ladder. They cannot be surpassed.]

THE DEAD NEVER REBEL.
[New York Sun.]

LONDON, Nov. 16. — The "Standard's" correspondent in Varna describes the recent massacre of Armenian Christians as of equal importance with the Bulgarian butcheries which led to the Russian-Turkish war.

Mr. Hagopian, chairman of the Armenian Patriotic Association in London, has sent Lord Kimberley, foreign secretary, a letter sent from Bitlis, which gives details of the origin of the disturbances. There was a Kurdish raid on Armenian cattle, resulting in a fight in which two Kurds were killed.

The friends of the Kurds took the corpses to Moush, and declared that the Armenians had overrun the land and were killing and plundering right and left. This furnished the pretext for the massing of the troops.

The letter then describes the horrors of the massacre. It says that on the admissions of the Turkish soldiers, some of whom tearfully protested that they merely obeyed orders, 6,000 people were killed. It is asserted that no compassion was shown to age or sex. In one place 300 or 400 women, after having been forced repeatedly to submit to the soldiery, were hacked to pieces with swords and bayonets. In another place 200 women begged at the commander's feet for mercy. The commander, after ordering that they be outraged, had them all despatched with the sword. Similar scenes were enacted in other places.

In one case sixty young brides and maidens were driven into a church and violated and butchered until their blood flowed from the doors.

A large company, headed by a priest, knelt near the church, begging for compassion, averring that they had nothing to do with the culprits who killed the Kurds. It was in vain: all were killed.

Several attractive women were told that they might live if they would recant their faith. They replied: "Why should we deny Christ? We have no more reason to do so than had these," pointing to the mangled bodies of their husbands and brothers. "Kill us, too."

This was done. The letter says that between 6,000 and 10,000 were killed. Babes were impaled on the same weapon with their mothers.

Several soldiers admitted that they had disposed of a hundred victims each. Nearly thirty villages were destroyed. Some families were burned with kerosene in their own houses.

BOSTON, Nov. 26. — This letter was received here today:

"CONSTANTINOPLE, Oct. 31. — We have word from Bitlis that the destruction of life in Sassoun, south of Moush, Armenia, was even greater than was supposed. The brief note which has reached us says: 'Twenty-seven villages annihilated in Sassoun. Six thousand men, women, and children massacred by troops and Kurds.' This awful story is only just beginning to be known here, though the massacre took place early in September. The Turks have used infinite pains to prevent news leaking out, even going to the length of sending back from Trebizond many hundreds from the Moush region who had come on this way on business.

"The massacre was ordered from here in the sense that, some Kurds having robbed Armenian villages of flocks, the Armenians pursued and tried to recover their property, and a fight ensued in which a dozen Kurds were killed. The slain men were 'semi-official robbers,' — *i. e.*, enrolled as troops and armed as such, but not under control. The authorities there telegraphed here that Armenians had killed some of the Sultan's troops. The Sultan at once ordered infantry and cavalry to put down the Armenian rebellion, and they did it; only, not finding any rebellion, they cleared the country so that none should occur in future."

A NEW REGULATOR OF WAGES.
[New York Tribune.]

W. S. Andrews, commissioner of street-cleaning, has undertaken, it is alleged, to punish the stablemen, sweepers, and drivers of the department who voted against Tammany Hall. To effect this, Mr. Andrews construes the law passed last winter, increasing the pay of hostlers and drivers from $600 to $720 a year and providing that employees in the uniformed force should receive pay for extra work on Sunday, in a way to further his plan. The law was clearly intended to pay all classes of the department employees for extra work done on Sundays, but Andrews says that this is not the case. This is the clause which raises the men's pay and gives them extra pay for working on Sundays: ". . . Of the sweepers, $720 each; of the drivers, $720 each; of the stable foremen, $1,200 each; of the assistant stable foremen, $900 each; of the hostlers, $720 each, and extra pay for work on Sunday."

After the word "each" there is a semicolon, except in the last instance, where a comma appears. Andrews has a particular dislike, it is asserted, for the men who have organized for their own benefit, and have appealed several times to him to respect their rights. He decided that the presence of a comma instead of a semicolon after the last "each" satisfied him that only the hostlers could draw extra pay for Sunday work, but he would give the hostlers only $10 a month for their extra Sunday work, or $120 a year, which, added to the $600 they received previous to the passage of the law, made their total pay $720. The hostlers, therefore, are no better off for their extra work on Sunday.

[Another new economic law: labor performed for government is a commodity the price of which is determined by the relation of the system of punctuation used by the legislative branch to the capacity of the executive branch to understand the same.]

BALLOTS SOLD AT AUCTION.
[New York Recorder.]

WEST UNION, Ohio, Nov. 27. — Tammany in its toughest day was guilty of no graver fraud on the ballot box than those which have for years disgraced Adams County. It became so common that the result of an election ever since the war has been figured on the amount of money each party had to spend. It was the regular, proper, and expected thing that at every election in every precinct from one to one hundred men assembled and stood in groups to be bought. They haggled all day over the price. Sometimes they would band together and sell out in a body. Both parties were guilty of the outrage.

The "New Era" in its latest issue threatens to become a Lexow or a Parkhurst. It asserts that the crimes are simply shocking. It tells of men who have been ruined by being compelled to give notes to the county committees. The "New Era" tells of an incident that occurred at the Tiffin precinct polls. James King was on hand to sell his vote. The rivalry to secure it resulted in an auction for his ballot. He was his own auctioneer. The Republicans bid $2, the Democrats $4. The figures ran up to $12.80, at which price he was sold to the Democrats. The money was publicly paid, and, escorted by John Crawford and Peter McKenzie, he went to the polls and put in the ballot, which the judges knew was a fraudulent one.

In the crowd, and openly applauding the sale, was the prosecuting attorney of this county and other sworn officers, and many so-called prominent citizens, among them leading church members.

[It is a curious economic question whether, when the supply of votes shall be doubled by the advent of the women, the price thereof will fall in consequence. If not, that famous law of final utility over the discovery of which the economists are as tickled as a dog with two tails will receive a very black eye. For the ballot appears to be a commodity of which the more we have the more we need, and the purchase of one vote makes it only the more necessary to purchase another. What is to become of economic science?]

THEIR LAST CHANCE TO STEAL.
[New York Sun.]

WASHINGTON, Nov. 26. — Over twenty-five members of Congress, it is said, have written letters to the sergeant-at-arms at the House, asking that their mileage for this session be forwarded to them, as they do not wish to come to Washington this winter. Replies have been sent that no mileage can be paid to members except to those who actually attend the session of Congress. In nearly every instance the request has been preferred by a defeated member, and it indicates a small attendance of such members at the short session this winter.

[These fellows, having lost their job and received several months' notice, now refuse to complete their contract, but insist on drawing pay. If other legislators would follow their example, however, there would be cause for rejoicing. Anarchy could afford to compromise with law-givers on a basis whereby the latter would agree to do nothing but draw pay.]

MUNICIPAL PLUNDER.
[New York Times.]

NEWARK, N. J., Nov. 29. — The committee on investigation of the common council will resume its work tomorrow. The exposures thus far made seem to justify the examination, for great extravagance has been shown in the expenditures, some committeemen having gone so far as to charge $14 apiece for dinners. There were costly City Hall repairs.

The Public Building Committee spent, in 1889, $30,000 for repairs and more than $3,000 for furniture, notwithstanding heavy purchases during the previous year. It provided valuable furniture for the City Hall, notwithstanding that it had been thoroughly renovated the preceding year. In this line alone $3,089.74 was paid to one firm. Desks ranged in prices from $14 to $75. Tables cost from $9 to $60, and an average of $5 was paid for repairing them. Chairs in dozen lots cost from $2.50 to $10, and repairs on each cost from $1.25 to $10.

The carpet in the city clerk's room, which is not large, cost the city $118.78. The city paid $1 a dozen for towels, and 2 cents for washing them, but did not receive, as far as shown, the 5 cents which were charged to bathers in the public baths for their use.

PROTECTED — AFTER DEATH.
[New York Sun.]

WASHINGTON, Nov. 23. — After litigation in congress and in the courts lasting more than twenty years, the government today paid the award made by congress to the heirs of Col. Samuel Strong of this city for work done under contracts for the District of Columbia. The original amount of the claim was $28,000, which, with interest from 1874 to 1889, brought the total to $53,280.83. The unhappy claimant wore out his life in seeking to collect his just dues, which now go to his heirs.

[Twenty years required to make the government as protector of property punish itself as violator of property!]

A Fatal Victory.

[London Church Reformer.]

A stranger entering the meeting-room of the London County Council sees facing him a section drawing of the Blackwall Tunnel. This is significant of all the good work which the Council has done; for with everything that has to do with the material well-being of the people this Progressive body is beyond reproach. True, a school-boy off the Hackney Road, when asked to give illustrations of any who 'scatter ruin round the land," after naming armies and plagues, added "the County Council, which pulls down our houses and does not build up any in their place." But in a few years' time this boy will find what good work the Council is doing in the way of rebuilding; and undoubtedly the Progressive majority deserve full praise for all they have done in their material improvement of London.

It is only when they begin to touch questions of morality and art that these men come so terribly to grief, and endanger the cause of municipal Socialism. For there can be no doubt that the Council's vote, and the speeches of leading Progressive Councillors, on Friday, October 26, has put back that cause many years.

Anything more paltry and trivial than the objections and difficulties which were placed in the way of rational recreation can hardly be imagined. Eminent lawyers have to be engaged at high fees to endeavor to persuade the council to allow a few smoking concerts to be held in this suburban hall, or to permit a dance once a month in a hall in which already roller-skating is allowed. A volume of legal argument is expended in convincing the councillors — or in not convincing them — that dancing is not more immoral than skating.

These matters are seriously dealt with by a hundred busy men, — men who on other matters are making London a better place, but on this are prejudiced, narrow, paltry. It was in settling such matters that the Council spent the morning of last Friday.

In the afternoon the questions they had to settle were these, — whether, because a few score of women frequent the Empire to meet men, the place where they stand or sit about shall be built up, and whether Mr. Burns will quietly consent to have a Trades Union movement led by anyone but himself. It was soon apparent that the member of the Council Committee who was also a member of the Vigilance Society, having got the thing well started in his double capacity, is anxious to vote in a disinterested way, and so has resigned his Vigilant membership: he is now able unreproved to hold up two hands against the Empire. It was soon apparent that the party who are so good on all material improvements for London were willing to accept the evidence of four notoriously prejudiced women, against the silent vote of the thousands who have enjoyed the Empire without remonstrance during the year. The character of the ladies of the ballet is allowed to be attacked without a Progressive voice in their defence; and Mr. Burns, in an irrelevant speech, is allowed to make it clear that, if only he, and not Mr. Shipton, had been asked to lead these ladies and the other workers on the stage, all would have been well. It will be necessary in the future for these ladies, when their livelihood is endangered, to make themselves familiar with the very feminine quarrels of these Labor leaders. Poor girls! in their innocence they thought they might venture to petition even the great John Burns for a consideration of their case; but they also went to a meeting which Mr. Shipton had helped to organize. This was fatal; they at once became a Tammany Ring, whatever that may be; and the man who shouted his pity for prostitutes had no justice for them.

The whole action of the Progressive party on the Council, with a few noble exceptions, shows that they are utterly incapable of dealing with the subtle moral questions involved. The Empire is rich, let us go for it: it is frequented by rich people, let us damn it; above all, Mr. Shipton supports it, that is enough, no argument is needed, Mr. Burns shouts, the rest follow.

The outcome of all this is that a body which is excellent on drains may be weak on art, and that an eagerness to pay Trades Union wages does not carry with it a power to deal with difficult moral questions.

Doubtless the Democracy will beat out for itself a way out of these difficulties, but in the meanwhile the Progressive party on the Council have made their first big mistake.

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